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Municipal Ownership Not Municipal Ownership.

Perhaps the subject that is now occupying the largest space in the minds of those interested in the government of cities is the question of municipal ownership and operation of public utilities, such as street car lines, gas works, water works and electric lighting plants.

It seems to be a fair proposition that where the value of such an utility is increased by the increase of population without any effort on the part of the owners, that there is an unearned value, which does not fairly belong to those who happen to own these utilities. It is generally contended, therefore, that these utilities, as they get their value from the people who use them, should be owned by the people. With this proposition we most cordially agree.

The principal corollary to the main proposition, however, is the question: Shall these public utilities, though owned by the public, be operated by the public or by lessees? This is the real practical problem of the day.

After the fullest examination, New York city determined that its great public utility, the Subway, should be built and owned by the city, but operated by lessees. This is the most notable instance of very decisive action after full examination of the subject of municipal operation of public utility.

And the reasons are obvious to any reflecting mind. Where a public utility is leased on the most advantageous terms, the public is assured of the best service, and that it will enjoy at some future time the results of the increased value in the property. There is no interest in municipal utilities to slack their hands in the management of the utility or to overlook neglect or incompetency. The lessees are held to a rigid accountability without impairing the public ownership.

On the other hand, where the public not only owns, but operates these utilities, it has been almost the universal experience that they have been incompetently and extravagantly managed, and that conditions have been endured because a utility was under municipal management that would not have been tolerated for one instant, if the utility had been operated by private persons.

In consequence of this, the public have not only suffered in service, but in pocket. It is well-nigh impossible for any system of municipal management to give the same intense supervision and economical methods that would be applied by private persons.

Who believes that if the gas works and water works of Richmond had been operated by private persons under lease from the city, that the people of Richmond would have tolerated from such persons what they have endured without murmur because, through their councilmen, they were doing it themselves? If any person other than the City Council had allowed the water that was supplied to our citizens to be of the character that it has been for so many years, there would have been an outcry amounting almost to insurrection.

As to the gas works, we are now undertaking to find out something about them, through an expert. And yet, in face of this lamentable experience, it is proposed to start an electric plant which the city is no better qualified to manage than either of its other public utilities.

It is very interesting to read the testimony of the manager of the great Glasgow street railway in regard to municipal management of public utilities in the city.

James Dalrymple, of Glasgow, says he has seen enough of this country to be convinced that municipal ownership will never do in a republic, and that the idea is one of the great dangers with which the people of this country must contend.

"To put street railroads, gas works, telephone companies, etc., under municipal ownership," he said this evening, "would be to create a political machine in every large city that would be simply impregnable. These political machines are always strong enough with their con-

trol of policemen, firemen and other forceholders.

"If, in addition to this, they could control the thousands of men employed in the great public utility corporations, the political machines would have a power that could not be overthrown. I came to this country a believer in public ownership. What I have seen here, and I have studied the situation carefully, makes me realize that private ownership under proper conditions is far better for the citizens of American cities."

The lack of that public spirit and integrity in this country which makes our situation so different from that which sustains the management in Glasgow or Liverpool, and, as we now learn, in Japan, is a melancholy reflection upon the character of our people. The disposition here to treat public office not as a public trust, but as a lazy bed, and a hot house for germinating graft, will have to be eradicated from the public mind before this country is really in a condition to manage properly its own municipal utilities. That is unhappily a long way off.

In the meantime, cities should own their public utilities, but should lease them to others under such terms as will secure for the city the best service and the amplest returns.

President Roosevelt and Peace.

"History hardly has a parallel of such a work accomplished in so quiet and graceful and delightful a manner," said Mr. Choate at a banquet last Tuesday evening, in reference to the President's peace initiative—and the thoughtful, as well as the blindest, jingo, will heartily take Mr. Choate's estimate of the value of the President's action. From every standpoint the Chief Executive of the United States, now no longer a little people, but a power in world politics, was the logical person to proffer the good offices that always precede peace negotiations, where neither combatant is exhausted. No King or President in Europe could have laid aside his country's hereditary entangling alliances long enough to make such an offer as that which came from President Roosevelt, for the United States is free to act on high impulses without being charged with sordid motives, and in the present war, at least, no European power could have escaped the suspicion of personal interest.

No less remarkable is the method which the President adopted. Instead of following the circuitous and involved procedure of foreign chancelleries, in the confidence of his own honesty of intent, he came straight to the point and dispatched an identical note to St. Petersburg and Tokio simultaneously, to the horror of certain French diplomats, who said "President Roosevelt has broken every rule of diplomacy." Apparently the President knew what he was doing, for his suggestion has been adopted, and as a further tribute to his nation and himself, Washington has been chosen as the place for conducting the negotiations.

This is a long step forward toward ending a terrible and protracted war. It remains, however, for the terms to be agreed upon, and in reaching that settlement, the greatest wisdom and moderation will be necessary. Russia's plenipotentiaries, or rather Russia's war party, must realize that at best they can only extend the time of the struggle until Japan exhausts herself, which is at present a very distant contingency. While all the time the tide of popular discontent is rising against a war which was never understood or desired.

For Japan the danger lies in excessive demands. Naturally Japan will try to assure herself against the possibility of Russian interference for the next fifty years, and will seek to lay the cost of the war as far as possible on her adversary. But—"nothing is so dangerous as a revolt by sheep"—and even the inert, disconnected population of Russia may be goaded to unconquerable resistance by the extravagant demands from the victors.

These difficulties, however, awaited the peace commissioners in any case—and in no way detract from the singular gifts and character of the President, whose personal intervention has at least made an earlier ending of hostilities possible.

Mr. Cleveland and the Equitable.

Ex-President Cleveland yesterday attended the first meeting of the trustees of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, and it is well to recall in part the letter he wrote to Mr. Thomas P. Ryan. Among his statements are:

"The high pressure of speculation; the madness of inordinate business schemes, and the chances taken in new and untried enterprises are constant temptations, too often successful in leading managers and directors away from scrupulous loyalty and fidelity to the interests of others confided to their care.

"We can better afford to slacken our pace than to abandon our old, simple American standards of honesty; and we shall be safer if we regain our old habit of looking at the appropriation to personal use of property and interests held in trust, in the same light as other forms of stealing."

To express the truth of honesty of purpose and fair dealings as ex-President Cleveland has done, and to have his words go home with the ring of absolute sincerity to the hearts of his countrymen, no matter what their political faith may be, is a tribute to his character and an example of what America can do that is worth far more than the untouchable wealth of our mines or the untended possibilities of our manufactures. It is easy enough to talk about being good and trusting aside the temptations that are sure to come, but the public of America at least knows how hard it is not to get snatched in the race for wealth, and the people of America know that what ex-President Cleveland says came from his heart, and that as far as in him lies he will keep faith with those whom he is sent to represent, and that so long as he is in power, it will not be possible to call the board of directors of the Equitable, as they have been justly called, "boodlers and grafters."

Ex-President Cleveland has never under-

stood the meaning of "trading" or compromised or used any dubious means for advance. He is said to have wrecked his party; he has certainly built himself a character that is impregnable. In the mad rush for wealth of to-day, the people of America need ever to keep before themselves the example of such character as this, and though Mr. Paul Morton may be regarded as only a straw representative of the Hyde interests, Mr. Cleveland will be felt, whether he speaks or not, to be the representative of the policyholders, whose interests he has been elected to protect.

The Cabbage Snake.

At last the Department of Agriculture has run to earth the cabbage snake. Since the kissing bug's tergistrations in 1890, nothing has compared to the excitement caused by the discovery of the so-called cabbage snake. In 1903 this foe to all cabbage growers and eaters made its appearance in Tennessee, South Carolina and Louisiana. The papers were filled with reports from correspondents of rumors of persons being poisoned by eating cabbage affected by this hair worm. Indeed, some reputable physicians were quoted as having said that persons eating cabbage which has been affected by the worm would die instantly, and one "State chemist" appears to have made the astounding statement that one of these little snakes contained enough poison to kill eight people.

"It should be unnecessary to add," the bulletin says, "that none of these reports has any foundation in fact. Nevertheless the known presence of the hair-worm in an affected district seriously injured the demand for cabbage there, causing very considerable loss to truckers and grocers. Serious portions, not alone because of widespread alarm caused by erroneous reports of loss of life, but also because of the very material loss to cabbage growers and others who handled this commodity, and the decided extension of the area in which the hair-worm was detected. The severe economic loss, however, was caused by general fear of poisoning from Virginia and West Virginia southward and westward to Kentucky, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Oklahoma and Colorado."

The cabbage hair-worm, as described by the department, is resembling a piece of a strand of corn silk, white in color. Its length varies from 2 to 9 inches, but reports have been received of a creature found in the heads of cabbage measuring 9 feet! The imagination of newspaper writers as to color runs riot through "green," "white," "light red," "olive green" and "yellow."

Many popular names have been bestowed upon it, including "cabbage snake," "snake," "snake worm," "serpent," "reptile" and "cabbage rattlesnake."

And so one more land an-serpent has been run to earth.

We are glad to note that the Cohen Company, one of the largest dry goods and department houses in the city, or in the South, not only endorses the early closing movement we have been advocating for this city during the summer months, but give strong and convincing reasons why the dry goods stores especially should make 5 o'clock the closing hour for the day. The Cohen Company express a willingness to make this the closing hour for Saturday also. What say the other merchants?

The Army and Navy Journal. In describing conditions in the Philippines, defines Ladrones as "insurrectos who have not been captured." After this rebuke, we trust the Ladrones will all have the courtesy to step up and do the correct thing.

A Boston paper wants to know how much longer Chicago is going to allow its best interests to be overridden by a one-horse Shea. The explanation seems to be that the opposition movement has been altogether under-Dunne.

As long as such a large proportion of sweet girl graduates continue to announce their engagements on commencement day, it can scarcely be maintained that the higher education for women is really a failure.

Mr. Cleveland has shocked a good many carefully insulated individuals by stating frankly that high finance is often indistinguishable from the less luxurious brands of larceny.

There seems to be no foundation for the rumor that the Czar would gladly advise Japan of his willingness to surrender but for the fact that he doesn't know the language.

We don't want to seem pushing, but couldn't Togo take advantage of the little lull to drop over and give a few pointers to Admiral Dickins?

Fortunately the terrible devastation going on at Port Monroe is strictly on paper. In short, it is constructive rather than destructive.

As to continuing that Chicago tie-up, why not get the real opinions of the strikers' families?

Still, whoever the new king of Norway is, it ought to be a native Scandinave.

GREAT CROWDS ARE TAKING ADVANTAGE OF OUR REOPENING SALE.

THE citizens of Richmond have never seen such rare bargains of SELECT DRUG-STORE GOODS. Everything positively sold at from 25 to 50 per cent. less than regular price from June 10th to July 1st. No humping methods resorted to. We give you precisely what you ask for.

L. Wagner Drug Co., 6th and Broad St., The Toilet and Perfumery Druggist. Open All Night.

HEAR DISCUSSION IN PETERSBURG

Hope That It Will Result in Resumption of Large Enterprise.

YOUNG DRUGGIST INDICTED

Check Flasher Pleads Guilty and Goes to the Penitentiary.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

PETERSBURG, Va., June 15.—The Supreme Court's decision to-day in the Fisher-Gould case, reversing the decision of the Hustings Court in this city, arouses great interest, and is being much discussed here. This is the first time that a decision by Judge Mullen has been reversed by the Court of Appeals. The fact that so much of the great properties involved are located in and around Petersburg, including the big canal and electric power house of the Upper Appomattox Company, make the case one of no little interest to people here. It is hoped that the building of the big dam and other work on the development of vast electrical power from the completed canal and power house on the upper Appomattox River, near Fernside Park, Richard B. Davis, of counsel for the Fisher side, stated this evening that as no copy of Judge Buchanan's opinion had yet been received, they could not as yet make any statement as to their move.

Alexander Hamilton, another prominent attorney on the Fisher side, went to Lexington this morning to attend a meeting of the Virginia Military Institute board, of which he is president.

A TRIP TO HILL. (Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

MANASSAS, Va., June 15.—In reporting the day and councilmen-elect of the town of Manassas yesterday your correspondent made a mistake. Michael Lynch was elected councilman, and not Mr. George P. Akers, as was reported.

Bowling is Captain. (Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

STAUNTON, Va., June 15.—The Staunton Rifles have elected First Lieutenant Harry Bowling as captain; Mr. J. H. Tucker, first lieutenant, and Mr. H. L. Ople, second lieutenant.

FAIRMOUNT NEWS.

Mr. Hampton Enos has left for Newport News on a business trip.

Mrs. Bennie Hall has returned from a very delightful trip to Washington.

Miss Louise of Newport, Twenty-third Street, continues ill with typhoid fever.

Mr. and Mrs. Hall and children are visiting in Hanover county, have returned home.

Miss Bessie Crane, of Washington, D. C., who has been visiting her mother, Mrs. C. A. Greene, has returned home, accompanied by her mother, who will remain here several days.

Miss D. H. Gaines has gone to Greensboro, N. C. Mr. Gaines goes as a State representative from the General Association Convention which is being held in that city. They will also visit several other places of interest before returning home.

Mrs. Harris and children, of Newport News, who have been visiting Mrs. W. E. Hinkle, sister of the former, have returned home.

Messrs. John Jeter, Howard Thacker and Tom Gregory, who returned from Newport News, where they spent several days.

The Fairmount Brownies defeated the Red Birds in a hotly contested game of ball by a score of 13 to 13 in their favor, Saturday evening.

Mr. J. Lonnie Mitchell has gone to Cuba in interest of the American Tobacco Company.

Mrs. Susan Manley has left for Newport News to visit her daughter for several weeks.

Mr. C. C. Cox and little daughter, Virginia, are at Buckroe Beach for a stay of two weeks. Mr. C. C. Cox has gone to New Bern, N. C., to finish out his recent change there.

Quite a large number of Fairmount ladies attended the Women's Foreign Missionary Association of the Richmond District Episcopal church in Newport, yesterday.

Mrs. J. Aubrey Enos and children, Master Ryland and little Miss Adelle, have returned from a very delightful visit to friends in Newport News.

Mrs. C. P. Perkins has received word of the critical illness of her little niece, Ruth Moore, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Norman Moore in their home in West Point.

Miss Pearl Gaines is spending ten days with her sister, Mrs. J. W. Ennis, on Mattox Hill.

Mrs. J. F. Crane is improving slowly from a severe spell of illness of several weeks' duration.

Miss Lida Bernard, of Richmond, has returned home after being the guest of Mrs. E. R. Hutchinson, of No. 221 Fairmount Avenue, the past week.

Miss M. Henderson has returned from Portsmouth, Va., after a stay of several weeks with the family of her uncle, Mr. Andrew McDaniel.

Miss Grace Luck, of Richmond, is visiting her friend, Miss Ethel Hutchinson.

Notice has been served on all property owners of the town to elect their premises with the public sewer and water main by August 1st. They shall be fined not less than \$5 nor more than \$10, each day thereafter until the condition is corrected, shall constitute a separate offense.

Miss Lettie Thacker is spending the week with Miss Bessie McDaniel, of Twenty-ninth Street, Newport News.

Miss Frances McDowell and Miss Weaver, of Portsmouth, Va., and the guests here the week of Mrs. Kate Henderson, son of the former.

Mrs. Carrie Gelling and little daughter, Maudie, have returned from a brief visit to West Point, their former home.

Messrs. J. B. Hart, Joseph Harper, Thomas Hunter and Robert Granger, who composed a city fishing party to the Chickahominy River, have returned with their catch of the finny tribe. They captured forty-two fine pike and seventy-five crabs and fish.

Miss B. B. Scott has been confined to her home several days by sickness.

Quite a number of the members of the memorial service held in the Methodist church last Sunday by their aid in memory of their departed member, Mrs. Rayburn. Rev. Mr. Scott made a most touching and appropriate address for the occasion.

Little Sadie Talley, who was so seriously injured last week by being kicked by a horse, is improving.

Mrs. W. H. Sickle is improving after an indisposition of several weeks.

The "New School" was given by the members of the choir of Fairmount Baptist church Tuesday night, was a complete success, both body and financially.

R. Gary had the affair in charge. The net sum of \$20 was raised for the building fund of the church.

Mrs. Huel Walker entertained quite a number of her friends at a party at a private residence in her home for the week of the Fairmount Hive of Lady Macabees. The evening was delightfully spent in music and various games, after which many refreshments and prettily decorated pies were sold and brought prices. Among other amusements, a musical selection, piano and vocal readings, especially were the readings given by Miss May Pevey.

WE make a specialty of HEAVY TIMBERS

For Wharves, Bridges, Trestles, Derricks, Large Buildings and other work requiring Southern

LONG LEAF YELLOW PINE.

In our ten yards, covering seven acres, we carry the

LARGEST STOCK IN THE STATE, and we respectfully solicit a share of your patronage.

WOODWARD & SON, Lumbermen, Richmond, Va.

MRS. PUCKETT WAS DEAD BEFORE TRAIN STRUCK HER

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

LYNCHBURG, Va., June 15.—Development here to-day relatives to the death of Mrs. Lucy A. Puckett, who was struck last evening by a fast Southern train near the city, was that she died of heart disease on the track, otherwise she would have had ample time to have escaped

being struck. Eye-witnesses to the tragedy to-day declare she lay on the track when she was struck. The pilot picked her up and threw her at least twenty feet into the air, breaking almost every bone in her body. No coroner's inquest has been held by the county authorities, and the funeral will take place to-morrow.

Snake in Her Room.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

FRIDEBURG, Va., June 15.—Miss Spotsylvania county, returned home on a visit to a neighbor and went to her room and saw a black snake about five feet long gliding across the floor. She was almost paralyzed with fright, and screaming the door, ran down stairs and gave the alarm. Search was made for the snake, but he was not located until the following morning, when he was found behind the door and was killed by being shot.

Mr. G. E. T. Lane, of Mathews county, has entered the contest for the Democratic nomination for the House of Delegates from Mathews and Middlesex counties, making the four candidates, the other three being George V. Hundev, the incumbent; W. W. McCready, of Mathews, and W. D. Chowling, of Middlesex.

Hansboro Hung.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

VIRGINIA HILL SPRINGS, Va., June 15.—William Hansboro, the negro, steward of the Homestead Hotel, March 17th, was hanged to the gallows at two o'clock, one minute past a clock. Death resulted in nineteen minutes. The body remained hanging for twenty-seven minutes, when he was taken down and his body abraded to the University College of Medicine, Richmond, Va. With a firm tread he needed the scaffold, and his last words were: "I die, trusting God may have mercy on my soul. May you all meet me in heaven."

The trap was sprung by Mr. Charles A. Gum, deputy sheriff. Work was well done, without the least hitch, and this morning he has no happier candidate, which county since September 24, 1883—a legal hanging.

Honor to Valentine.

(Special to The Times-Dispatch.)

WILLIAMSBURG, Va., June 15.—At the last meeting of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of William and Mary college, Edwin Valentine, of Lexington, Richmond, was elected president for the ensuing year. This is a high honor awarded to a distinguished scholar. Several rising young alumni of the college were elected to membership. The honorary members elected at the fall meeting of the society.

A Councilman.

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